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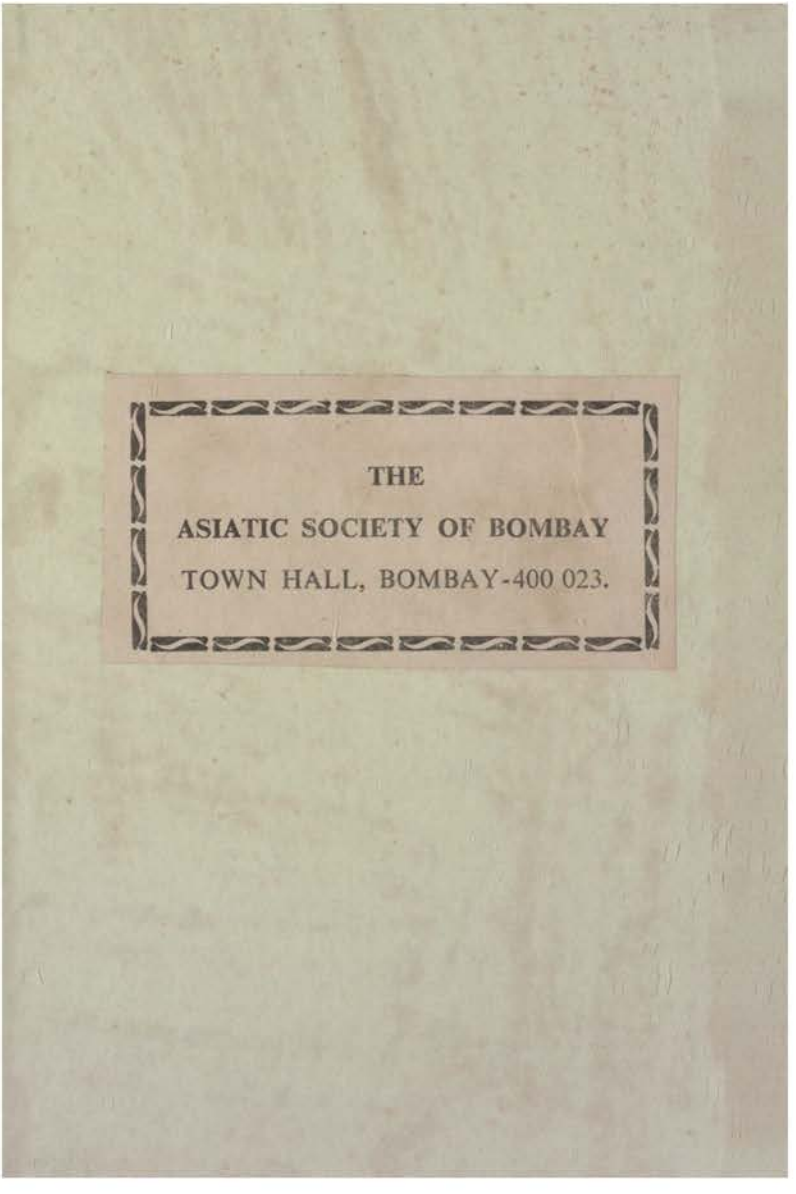

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TIME BEARS US ALONG SO SILENTLY AND smoothly that it is, often, almost with a start that some of us old folks awake, as it were, to the consciousness that we are already rapidly nearing our graves. Many and weary have been the years of my pilgrimage, and now the time of peace and rest, for me at any rate, draws nigh apace; but, before I pass away and am no more seen, before that night falls for me in which no man can work, I would fain speak to those brethren who have so zealously toiled beside me, and to that people whom they and I love so well, of the great and enduring Hope that is in me—a Hope that, could I see it realized, would light for me the portals of the unexplored, and allow me to depart with the blessed assurance that a happier day was dawning for our Beloved Country.

As I move, silently and unnoticed, from one district and province to other districts and other provinces of this great Empire, amidst much that seems to me to be regretted, much that I cannot but think wrong, one feature of Indian life of the present day forces itself everywhere on my attention, with an intensity that overpowers and almost excludes all other sensations. Struggle against it as I will, and as I have for years now struggled, one gloomy shadow overclouds all my waking hours, one hateful spectre haunts all my dreams. Whatever I do, wherever I go, one sorrowful fact stares me in the face and withers all the flowers of my life. I have endeavoured to drape it over with more pleasing and presentable facts, but the best of these, that I could procure, look only as little scraps of coloured rags, sparsely scattered here and there upon a vast and rugged mountain side. I have tried to forget, to ignore it; to live and float upon the surface, without looking down into or giving heed to the depths below; but all in vain. Year after year, the heartache has grown within me, till now at last, urged by a power stronger than myself, I feel that I must speak, and speak out. I have long hesitated to do this, for until recently I have been unable to see my way—unable to set before myself any distinct goal, any definite course of action offering any hopes of mitigating the misery that so oppresses me. But the time of doubt has passed. I see my way, my goal, the definite course of action, clearly enough now, and if, before I pass away, I can succeed in making my countrymen, high and low, see it with equal clearness and adopt it with a corresponding determination to succeed, I, at any rate, shall not have laboured or suffered in vain.

My friends, I am glad to meet you all once more after our long parting. You are looking well and cheerful enough I must own; it has been a little cold no doubt, but you are well clothed and well fed and your darling children, and all those near and dear to you, have all that even your kind hearts can desire for them. You do well, brethren, to feel gratitude for all these blessings, which, perhaps, you have as yet done little to merit, for at this moment there are fully fifty millions of your countrymen who are moaning hunger-stricken, for the better times that *never* come, who with one single dirty rag about their loins, shiver even in this warm clime in the chill evenings and raw mornings, who can never fill their own stomachs, who, worse still, have to see the one joy and crown of their lives, their little children, unfed, unclothed, to watch them, weakened by insufficient nourishment, fall one by one (vainly clinging to their misery-maddened parents for protection), innocent victims to the demons of disease that are ever prowling through our famished population.

Ah men! well fed and happy! with, so to say, scarce a sorrow or a care (for what are *your* troubles to their's?), do you at all realize the dull misery of these countless myriads? From their births to their deaths, how many rays of sunshine think you chequer their gloom-shrouded paths? Toil, toil, toil; hunger, hunger, hunger (not actual starvation or it would sooner be all over); sickness, suffering, sorrow, these alas! alas! are the key-notes of their short and sad existences, and who can deny that for these fifty-odd millions and more, it were better that they had never been born, better, almost, that stones were now tied about their necks and that they were cast into the rivers and drowned!

You, who are comparatively so well off—you for whom life, despite its inevitable sorrows, has yet so many joys, so many sunbeams—*do* you, *can* you, picture to yourselves the hopeless sadness of these your unhappy brethren's hard and suffering lives? Do you feel for them? Are you men, or stones? I will not say animals, for all know how much many animals sympathize in the sufferings of their fellows; but are you stones? And if not, how is it that with this ocean of misery surging beneath your feet, you are all so smiling and comfortable? How is it that you are apparently making no single effort to remove this national calamity, and—in so far as you calmly tolerate it—disgrace?

Do you perchance give credence to the idle words of those specious advocates of selfishness who tell you that such misery *must* be; that the lower classes must suffer; that it is the lot to which it has pleased the Almighty to call them; that their sufferings are a dispensation of Providence which they should accept with cheerful resignation, and that it is useless to attempt to fight against the will of God, or distress ourselves about sufferings that He has ordained? Doubtless the time will come when these blasphemers will *know* something more about that will of God, of which they so glibly talk; but of this much *we* may all be certain, *viz.*, that it is *not* the will of God that any man should undergo sufferings which can be

averted from him by his fellowmen, and that on the contrary it *is* the will of God, hearken to it or not as we may, that each one of us should avert all the suffering he possibly can from all his fellows.

The greater portion of this incalculable amount of suffering is preventible and preventible by *you*; and I solemnly tell you, standing as I do on the verge of the other life, that unless you do exert yourselves to prevent it, you will assuredly sooner or later have to regret it bitterly. Believe me that the retribution for shirking good work is no less certain than the retribution for doing evil work. Let people delude themselves as they may; let them drug their inner knowledge of the truth, their consciences, as they will with worldly pleasures, or seek to smother them with worldly pursuits and ambitions, they yet never wholly lose consciousness of the fact, which every one of you know in your inmost hearts, that *as* men sow *so* inevitably, here or elsewhere, shall they reap, and that precisely according to your own acts and omissions here, shall divine justice deal with you in the great hereafter.

But I foresee that not a few will innocently reply that they are already seeking to mitigate this evil; that they give alms to the poor, that they subscribe to dispensaries, nay perchance that they have given handsome donations to a certain gracious lady's project for providing medical aid for women. Well, without condemning any of these, though too often they mean the frittering away of money and energies that could be better employed in other channels, they are all as though when some great dam had been breached and a flood were roaring down the valley, a little group should gather beside the torrent and commence baling it out with thimbles. It is on the dam that they should mount and there struggle to fill in the fissure; it is to the origin of our flood of misery that we must go and there seek to staunch this ocean of tears. It is for women and children to deal, and tenderly, as they ever will, God bless them! with particular instances; it is for us men resolutely to gird up our loins, and looking facts in the face grapple with principles and prime causes.

Now the prime cause of all this suffering is Poverty—a poverty such as the world has never before seen on so vast a scale—a poverty so extreme that it is difficult to make strangers realize it. I well remember a dear English lady, with whose friendship I was honoured, once saying to me that what she most especially noticed in our Indian towns and cities was the extreme preference the people showed for marketing in the evenings, and when I explained to her that this was because these poor folks had only one meal a day, and that one in the evening, and only just so much of a meal then, as the day's earnings would purchase, and that on those days when they and their's earned nothing, they and their's lay down starving to try and forget in sleep the cruelty of their lots, except in rare cases (ah! so rare) when goaded by the gnawing pangs of hunger they prowled about seeking to steal the needful food, that the social organization of which they were miserable units implacably denied them, the tears came into her kind eyes;

but she was a woman, and an Englishwoman, and she could not understand that this was all a great wrong that her countrymen, in all ignorance for the most part, had wrought us; a wrong against which it was our bounden duty to rise, not to revenge, not to speak, or even feel malignantly about, but simply to put an end to.

To the British Government we owe peace—a great blessing, but one which *may* be purchased too dearly, since it is better, for instance, for a nation to have to fight and to lose even ten per cent. of its numbers by the sword than for the whole nation to starve. We owe, we say the great blessings of peace, of protection, comparatively complete, to life and property, of a grand new departure in education, including the grandest examples of noble lives which we have come to learn of through our connection with them, and an infinite series of applications of Western science to the affairs of every-day life which have added to the comforts and enhanced the luxuries of the rich and the well-to-do, but we owe to them also the grievous impoverishment of the masses, which has plunged more than fifty millions of our people permanently into dire distress.

There is no question that the Europeans will dispute all this. Some will deny the misery—they are as a rule so astoundingly ignorant of the conditions of our lives that they will do so in all good faith, fully believing what they say. This, indeed, is and ever has been one of our greatest troubles. There are bad men amongst *them*, as amongst ourselves, but as a body they are honest and upright and desirous of doing right. Only unfortunately they are utterly ignorant of our lives and of the condition of the country, and are so wrapped up in a comfortable sense of their own good intentions, which are a reality, and great knowledge and wisdom, which are myths, that like the Bourbons they never learn anything, while unlike them they forget a great deal, and too often those liberal principles that they learnt in boyhood. Many Europeans, I say, will deny the misery, but as for you, *you* know that what I say is the exact truth, and that, if anything, I understate the case. Not a few of you are old enough to have heard with your own ears, from those who had had ample experience of it, full accounts of the state of affairs under our Indian rulers prior to 1803, and you know that tho' individuals here and there suffered cruelly, though it was often rather hard for the rich, especially rich traders and bankers, the masses were comparatively well off, and were never persistently ground down by poverty as they now are. Once in a way there was a big famine, and hundreds of thousands (though much fewer than now-a-days) perished, and there was an end of it. Now and again there was a storm, sometimes hail, once in a lifetime a thunderbolt, but sunshine and fair weather predominated. The British have a good deal mitigated the hail, and set up tremendously elaborate conductors to prevent damage from lightning, but they have banished all the sunshine, and the masses are now withering out a pallid existence in a stifling, never-lifting fog of penury.

But there are Europeans, who know the country and move

much amongst the people, specially many good missionaries, who will admit the misery, but deny that the British Government is mainly, or even appreciably, responsible for its creation. They will assign all kinds of reasons but the true ones, and I have even met estimable and self-devoted men who attributed the sufferings of the people mainly to their refusal to adopt Christianity. Now I am the last to deny that the adoption of a higher standard of morality might do something to diminish the sufferings of the masses, who, besides suffering from a poverty from which they cannot escape, suffer also from the results of that increasing addiction to strong drinks that our paternal Government, with so many protests to the contrary, has so sedulously nursed and is *still* nursing amongst us; but it is altogether putting the cart before the horse to pretend that the existing sufferings of the people can be materially diminished either by an improved morality or an increase of education,—the fact being that neither of these can become a practical possibility, until the poverty, the extreme, excessive, all grinding poverty that is crushing all life, physical and mental, out of the masses, is mitigated.

To all, however, who have really investigated in an impartial and persevering manner the present and past conditions of the people of India, the fact that, despite the many shortcomings and misdeeds of Indian rulers and Indian administrations, there was, in their times, no appreciable fraction even of the misery that now pervades the lowest classes under British rulers and British administrations, is a fact too conclusively demonstrated to admit of argument. But *post hoc* is not always *propter hoc*, and many of the panygerists of British rule, unable to deny the fact, which indeed is disputable only by ignorance, attribute it, not to any existing maladministration, but to the increasing pressure of population due to the protection afforded by the present stable and just Government. But this view seems untenable in face of the well established principle that in a country like this, still thronged with virgin resources, any increase of population, up to limits not yet nearly attained in India, involves, where no abnormal adverse influences are at work, a quite proportionate increase of the fund out of which that population is supported.

With so many of the regulative conditions of life, so much improved as they have unquestionably been by the British, this present enhanced population ought to be far better off, and all classes, high and low, ought to be richer; whereas, as a matter of fact, the higher classes are poorer and the lower classes are absolute paupers, and this is directly and distinctly traceable to a fundamental defect in British rule.

This defect is twofold; for an, even then, poor and backward country, our European friends created an administration too expensive and too elaborate for any than a very rich and very advanced one, so that, throughout, too large a portion of the earnings of the country has been drawn away in taxation, and, what is worse still, too large a proportion

of the vast sums thus abstracted temporarily from the country have been so expended as to become permanently lost to it.

Under the worst and most grinding native tyrant, the proceeds of taxation, with the exception of comparatively quite small sums hoarded, very soon found their way back into the country to lubricate the wheels and even furnish fuel for the commercial machinery of the country; but under our present benign rulers, many millions (though not *quite* so many as is commonly supposed) yearly leave the country for good and all, and never directly or indirectly return to it. Of course we are all familiar with the boasted *per contra*, the many millions of British Capital said to be invested in India (it is not really anything like so large a sum when critically analysed as is supposed), and the argument that, although interest on this is yearly sent to England, this only represents a portion of the profits thus generated, the balance remaining in this country. But so far as the most careful investigations can enable one to speak on so very involved a question, I believe it is certain that all that remains in such cases is the simple hire of labour which in many cases (like the indigo business) could have probably found more profitable, and certainly more congenial, employment in other channels, had this been really, and not in many respects only nominally, a free country.

Here is the clue to all our troubles, here is the breach in the dam; it is this persistent drawing away of the wealth of the country that we must protest against, and not merely this, *but* put a stop to. Year by year a large proportion of the profits of the industry of our entire population is drawn away to increase the working capital of another people—our brethren no doubt—good and worthy folks certainly, *but* quite able to provide for themselves, and by no means really hungering for our poor little ewe lambs of annual earnings which are year by year remorselessly torn from us and cast into the mighty machinery of the British financial world. Talk about the American Sausage Machine, into which whole pigs and calves were flung to emerge as ham and veal sausages, it is but as a child's toy to that gigantic machine of British commerce, into whose greedy maw nothing is too vast—whether the entire earnings of one nation, as in our case, or the liberties of another as in that of Burmah, nothing I say is too vast, nothing too sacred, to be cast, so that it may emerge later as dividends to British investors!

But to return: here, and here only, is the source of the trouble; year by year a large and yearly increasing share of the profits of the industry of the country is being drawn out of this country, where it ought to remain to increase our working capital, and is being permanently transferred to another country which alone thereafter benefits by it, and the consequence is that year by year the country is growing poorer, and year by year that squalid penury which is everywhere swallowing up our lower classes like a rising swamp, is deepening, widening, blackening! Widespread and saddening however as are the consequences of this fundamental defect in the British administration, we owe the British so much that we could well afford

to forgive them all this, if only *now*, when the evil is patent, they would honestly grapple with the difficulty and apply, with such promptness, as the conditions of the case admit, the needful remedial measures.

These are simple enough. As speedily as may be, without needless expense and without injustice to individuals, 90 per cent of the *non*-Indian agency employed in the Government in all its multifarious branches should be replaced by Indian.* Instead of increasing the European army, as has just been done by 10,000 men, it should have been diminished by at least an equal number, and as time went on further and further reduced, any loss of military strength being made up by the encouragement of Indian volunteers and the organization of an Indian militia throughout the empire. The Secretary of State's Council should be abolished and the real governing power transferred to this country, the Government here being largely leavened by a representative Indian element, so that the people may have a potential voice both in the imposition of all taxation and in the disposal of its proceeds.

But, it will doubtless be said that these, after all, are a mere reproduction, in other words, of the resolutions at which the late National Congress arrived, and which the entire country through hundreds of associations and in hundreds of public meetings has since ratified and insisted on! Assuredly they are no discoveries of mine; assuredly you are as well aware of their paramount importance as myself; but the difference between us is that, while you are inclined to despair of inducing the authorities to adopt these measures (and other minor cognate ones), I am confident of your ability to secure this, and my great Hope is that I may induce you to take heart of grace, pluck up spirit and so combine and persevere as to make this a certainty. Men differ in colour, local customs and national habits disguise affairs in varied garbs, but human nature varies so slowly that the political lessons of one country and one age become often, as time rolls by, curiously applicable to other countries at later periods, and it is by a brief reference to one such lesson of the past that I hope to show you, alike the duty we all owe now to our country and how we can best perform this.

Fas est ab hoste doceri, and still more admissible is it to take a lesson from our good friends, the English, and learn from them how to battle with and overcome the fiscal tyranny that is, now, killing *us*, as a similar one, years ago, was destroying *them*.

It is not so *very* long ago; I myself can well remember as a boy (I was being educated then in England) this great struggle, and I could give you my own account of all that took place; but, you might some of you fancy, so close is the resemblance of the two cases, that I was subordinating the real facts to the object I now have

* I here use the word Indian as applying to all persons, without distinction of race, creed, or colour, who are *bona fide* domiciled here, who intend living and dying here, and who will therefore give back to the country, as time goes on, all that they draw from the country as salary. In official parlance most of those I call Indians are designated statutory natives; but to these I also add pure Europeans not born but only permanently domiciled here.

in hand, and I shall therefore, for the most part, content myself with quotations from a standard English book, Gowing's Brief Biography of Richard Cobden.

Richard Cobden! Yes, it is to the Anti Corn Law League, to the great seven years war against the nefarious Corn Laws, that I would call your attention. How similar are the cases! our English brethren were being starved by iniquitous laws (passed in the interest of a small group of aristocrats), which prevented food getting *into* the country. Our own poor brethren are being starved by institutions now completely obsolete, (maintained in the interest of a small group of bureaucrats) which drain away all our money *out* of the country.

Yes, the masses in England were suffering, were plunged in distress, and constantly on the verge of starvation as the palpable result of iniquitous fiscal ordinances maintained in the interest of a small class, and yet Mr. Gowing tells us:—

"People had grown hopeless of securing free trade in corn "until there should be a different system of voting and a different "set of men sent up to the House of Commons."

"As soon as the foreign corn came in with the stoppage of the war, "the farmers began to cry that they would be ruined, for rents had "been going up for many years. What was to be done. Should the "landowners largely reduce their rents? Or should a law be passed "to keep up the price of corn at the expense of the poor people "who wanted bread? Well the poor people were not in Par-"liament to plead their own cause against dear bread. Generally "they had no votes and no voice in the election of members of "Parliament."

"In the seventeen years, from the battle of Waterloo to the passing "of the Reform Bill, there never was a reform meeting or a reform "demonstration at which the corn laws were not denounced. But "everybody knew that there was no hope for the repeal of the corn "laws by the unreformed Parliament."

"Even Cobden, however, and the Anti Corn Law League would "have found it impossible to get the corn laws repealed but for the "triumph of the Reform Bill of 1832."

Here then was the English nation, a far more resolute and less law-abiding people than ourselves—a people of whom we are told, time after time, that they broke the windows of those most instrumental in maintaining the obnoxious regulations; that "the military were called out, several persons were killed, the Houses of Parliament were guarded by soldiers, and indeed the whole of London appeared to be in possession of the army. Similar disturbances prevailed in most of the populous districts of the North of England and the Midland Counties, &c., &c." Well even this energetic people, so ready to right themselves, were being starved by iniquitous fiscal restrictions maintained for the benefit of a small group of aristocrats and a largish body of landowners, just as our people are being starved by fiscal arrangements maintained for the benefit of a small group of

Indian bureaucrats and the British Standing Army, and yet even these people felt that redress was hopeless, and that they must continue to suffer and to starve until the form of the Government should be modified, until they should be really and not merely nominally represented therein,—until, in fact, they should possess that direct share in the administration of their own country which is the birthright of every free citizen of a free country.

Now as regards the Anti Corn Law League "it is now univer-"sally allowed to have been the best and most ably managed "popular movement in the history of political progress, and neither, "rival nor enemy, past nor present, has ever hesitated to admit "that the agitation owed its success in the main to Richard Cobden, "and that for such a task he was the ablest leader that has ever "appeared upon the scene of English political life," and yet we are distinctly told that even this league, the most ably managed popular movement in the history of political progress, led by the ablest leader that has ever appeared upon the scene of English political life, would have found it impossible to procure the repeal of those iniquitous fiscal regulations that were ruining the country and starving the people, but for the fundamental reform effected in 1832 in the constitution of the Government of the country.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear! Though an Angel came down from Heaven, and enunciated the truth, nothing could tell us more plainly than these passages in English political history, that we have no chance of getting rid of those odious fiscal arrangements which are ruining India, and starving our people, until we are "really, and not merely nominally, represented" in the governing body of the country, and "possess that direct share in the administration of" our "own country, which is the birthright of every free citizen of a free country!"

If, then, we are willing to profit by the lessons of history, and to be guided by the experience of that noble nation to whom we owe our existing conceptions of political rights, and our aspirations for a freedom like their own, we shall, henceforth, instead of frittering away our money and our energies on a score or more of different objects, some local some general, one and all, everywhere, combine to lay hold upon, and make our own, in defiance of all opposition and in despite of all obstacles, "that direct share in the administration of our own country," that our English friends, whose humble pupils in these matters we are, have taught us to be our "birthright."

Now, this share can only be obtained in virtue of some form of representative institutions, and what, therefore, we have to struggle for and win is the introduction into the Government of that representative element contemplated in the National Congress' 3rd Resolution.

But officials, high and low, tell us that what we contemplate is absurd and impracticable. Let us not be discouraged; this is the way of officials all over the world, this is precisely how they met the demands of our English brothers.

When Cobden and other members of the League in 1839 informed a nobleman (who had taken an active part in the Corn Law legislation) that they were agitating to secure the total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws, his reply was "you will overturn the monarchy as soon as you will accomplish that." When in that same spring 200 delegates waited upon Lord Melbourne, a so-called Whig and then Prime Minister, and explained to him that their object was the repeal of the Corn Laws, he replied "you know that to be impracticable." At the same time Sir Robert Peel, the Tory leader, told them the thing was out of the question, while Sir James Graham denounced the poor delegates as "levellers" and "asserted that if the Corn Laws were repealed great disasters would fall upon the country, the land would go out of cultivation, Church and State could not be upheld, all our institutions would be reduced to their primitive elements, and the people whom the Corn Law repealers were exciting would pull down our houses about our ears."

Yet within less than seven years, as the result of the agitation of the League, the Corn Laws were to be for ever abolished, and this mainly through the instrumentality of Cobden's great convert, Sir Robert Peel, who so few years previously had treated the demand for abolition as too preposterous for consideration. Here, again, is the double lesson for us. Firstly to laugh to scorn, as they deserve, all the words of discouragement and abuse, the threats and ridicule that we are certain to meet with alike from officials and not a few of the Anglo-Indian non-officials; and secondly to mould our agitation on the same lines as that "most ably managed popular movement in the history of political progress," the Anti Corn Law League.

"The task of the Anti Corn Law League, Mr. Cobden said, "was to be that of instructing the nation. There had been agitations "of the starving poor for cheap bread, but the starving poor had had "no votes, no system, no persistence, no clear grasp of the soundness "of the principle of free trade, and no means of bringing conviction "home to the minds of those who held the power in their hands. "The League set to work to obtain by all legal and constitutional "means, such as the formation of local associations, the delivery of "lectures, the distribution of tracts, and the presentation of petitions "to Parliament—the total and immediate repeal of the Corn Laws."

In the early part of the Session of 1839, Mr. Villiers moved (in the House of Commons) that a number of petitions against the Corn Laws should be referred to a Committee of the whole house. These were mainly the petitions that came from the movements of the League. The House rejected the motion. Then Mr. Villiers moved that certain members of the Manchester Anti Corn Law Association should be heard at the bar. The motion was defeated by 361 votes against 172. The delegates waiting in London for the decision of the House met next morning to consider what should be their next step. There was no sign of discouragement, and speaking to his brother delegates Cobden said, 'the delegates have offered to instruct the House; the House has refused to be instructed; and

the most unexceptionable and effectual way will be by instructing the nation." So has it fared with us; our educated men singly, our Press far and wide, our representatives at the National Congress,—one and all have endeavoured to instruct the Government, but the Government, like all autocratic Governments, has refused to be instructed, and it will now be for us to instruct the nations, the great English nation in its island home, and the far greater nation of this vast continent, so that every Indian that breathes upon the sacred soil of this our mother land may become our comrade and coadjutor, our supporter, and, if needs be, our soldier in the great war that we, like Cobden and his noble band, will wage for justice, for our liberties and rights.

It took *them* seven years; it may take us as long or longer, but like them we are certain of ultimate success.

> For Freedom's battle once begun
> Bequeathed from wearied sire to son
> Tho' baffled oft, is ever won.

Shortly after Cobden's declaration, already referred to, Mr. Villiers brought on his annual motion, calling upon the House in Committee "to take into consideration the Act IX of George IV, regulating the importation of foreign corn." The motion was discussed for five nights and was then defeated by the decisive majority of 147!

Were the leaguers disheartened? Some were for the moment; but Cobden never wavered; his spirit soon inspired all, and in that apparent defeat was planted the germ of future triumph. All the local associations were brought into one union, thenceforth known as the League, and the executive committee of the Manchester Association were duly constituted the Council of the League.

"Then the serious business of instructing the nation began. "The demand of starving thousands for cheap bread had been "heard often enough in times of stress and trial, but they who under-"stood the question of free trade, either as a principle or in its applica-"tion to the complicated conditions of industry or commerce, were few "—whether among the poor or rich, the educated or the ignorant. "It was the business of the League to make the country comprehend "the rights of the question, and this task was carried out with splendid "energy and at a vast cost. A periodical paper, the Anti Corn Law "Circular, the organ of the League, was started for the dissemination of "information and argument on the great question; tracts, leaflets and "pamphlets were distributed by hundreds of thousands; lecturers were "sent up and down the country; meetings were called, both in large "towns and in country districts, at which, in many cases, Cobden or "some other well qualified spokesman of the League would be present."

Numberless were the difficulties that had to be encountered—the landowners and magistrates were of course against the lecturers—here a farmer offered a bushel of wheat to anyone who would throw the lecturer into the river—here an innkeeper toadying, as is the wont of such, the local magnates turned the lecturer out on to the

street—here a magistrate fined one for lecturing in the open air under pretence that he had obstructed a thoroughfare—at Stamford a mob threatened to tear the Leaguers to pieces—in many places they met with marked hostility from the very people whose cause they were so heroically fighting. But they persevered, and as melt the snows of winter before the warm winds of spring, so melted before their good tempered persistence, the ignorance of friends and the opposition of foes. All such opposition and discouragement, aye, and more too, (for our local bureaucracy are more powerful and less scrupulous, perhaps, than even county magistrates in 1837 in England) shall we certainly have to encounter, but even we have only to persevere with our agitation to succeed. To those in real earnest there is no such thing as failure—*Labor omnia vincit.*

But all this could not of course be done without money. "The League was most liberally supported with money by the great manufacturers and merchants of Lancashire and the North of England." I cannot quote the exact figures for each of the years, but I find that at the outset a few men subscribed £6,000, that in 1842 £50,000 were subscribed, in 1843-44, £100,000, and, in 1845, just before the final triumph, £150,000. We have plenty of millionaires amongst us, quite competent, if they will only combine, to furnish, if not quite such gigantic sums, at least funds fully adequate for the more modest requirements of this impoverished land, and I have every confidence that many of these will, when they come to understand the merits of this great question, which we propose to make our starting point and at the same time our prime object, join us not only with head and heart, but also with hand and purse.

For, although I myself so strongly urge upon you this struggle primarily and immediately in the interest of those mute suffering millions, a consciousness of whose sad fate seems for me to rob everything else in life of its brightness, it must be manifest to you that on this great fundamental reform hinges not only all those other political objects for which this or that section of our people are striving, but equally the safety, prosperity and happiness of every class of our entire community. I care not whether it be prince or peasant, noble or plebeian, rich or poor—one and all have an abiding and paramount interest in securing the priceless blessings of representative institutions.

Let us be frank and speak out. Who amongst you, whatever your rank and position, can ever feel thoroughly safe and comfortable under the present autocratic, irresponsible Government? Are you a so-called independent Prince? Can you feel any certainty that you or your successors will retain your or their quasi-independence? Our gracious Queen Empress, indeed, declared that there should be no more annexations, and here in defiance of all past pledges, and equally, in my judgment, in defiance of justice and common sense, we have Burmah annexed. You all know the process. A tissue of lies as to your public and private acts and life, carefully nursed into a bristling barrier against all public sympathy—a story about the intrigues of

some Foreign nation—a stroke of the pen, and the Kingdom of a prince, and the liberties of a people, are blotted out for ever. I tell you that with representative institutions, such iniquities as these would be for ever impossible, and that from the day India, now downtrodden and despised, secures this great vantage ground, every Prince obtains a guarantee for his continued independence with which he can at last rest secure. But even those amongst you who need not at present apprehend annexation—whose territories are too poor to pay for British Administration, and contain no sites especially eligible as healthy and pleasant military cantonments, what peace or comfort have you, if you chance to fall under the displeasure of some imperious political agent, or incur the suspicions of some crack-brained one? I don't want, as we say, to dig up buried bones, but you one and all feel the truth of what I say, and one and all know that there is no sense of peace or security for any one of you under the existing benevolent, but purely despotic Government. Again I say help us, privately only if you will, to secure representative institutions, and from the day that India is blessed with these, all the intrigues, annoyances, humiliations, doubts and anxieties that now distract your lives and prevent your giving the time and attention you would fain bestow upon your people, to your real business of ruling—all these I say will become things of the past, impossibilities in the future.

But let us descend a step or two lower on the social ladder; noblemen, races, millionaires. Let me ask you, what sense of security have you? Do you not tremble in your shoes, lest by some unlucky chance you get into the bad graces of a Lieutenant-Governor? And do not we get Lieutenant-Governors of all sorts? Now and again, at rare junctures, good gentlemen and true like Sir C. Aitchison, or cold, selfish, cynical, unsympathetic, but still capable men like Sir A. Lyall. But do we not get creatures, who can neither speak nor think, rewarded with the Gubernatorial dignity for having done dirty work for Government, a sort of combination of the whilom Lahore Chief Court, "*be-kath, be-ankh*, and *be-akle*?"* Do we not get men absolutely unfit for any such position, made Lieutenant-Governors as a reward for being sons of the Queen's mother's stewards? Or, again, aristocrats with great connections, unable to resist the fascinations of their neighbours' wicked wives, and made Lieutenant-Governors, in the hopes of their being thus compelled to reform—a hope not always fulfilled? Or, again, a weak fractious, bigotted invalid, shunted out of council for which he was too aggravatingly imbecile? And yet the displeasure, however unwarranted, of anyone of such beings can, as you know practically, make your lives a burthen to you. From the Lieutenant-Governor, the Commissioner takes his cue, from the Commissioner the Collector, from the Collector the Superintendant of Police, and from these all their underlings. You are absolutely innocent; some enemy has told some lies about you to an incompetent Lieutenant-Governor; he has taken a dislike to you for some trivial cause; but for five years you are a miserable man, happy if by great largesses to

* *i. e.*, handless, eyeless, brainless, a popular but strictly correct description of a former trio of Chief Court Judges.

the old wily jamadars and fifty other underlings, dallis, carriages, elephants (I will not say more) you escape actual public degradation.

My poor friends, join us secretly if you will—for you are, it must be admitted, somewhat timid at times—but help us to secure representative institutions, and we warrant you that under these you shall be able to laugh, instead of as now trembling, at the whims and caprices of Lieutenant-Governors and Private Secretaries, Commissioners, Collectors, and even Superintendants of Police, may the time will then come for all these official evolutes to mind *their* p's and q's, and to take care that they give *you* all reasonable satisfaction, or the British House of Commons, prompted by the Indian Legislature will, as a last resort, know the reason why!

Shall I go lower again on the scale—well-to-do traders, bankers, agriculturalists and the like? You are too small, luckily, to fear much from Lieutenant-Governors—Adjutants* do not feed on ants—but do not Collectors and Joints, Superintendents, and even Inspectors of Police, "strike an awe and terror in your aching sight?" What misfortune would you consider equal to offending one of these awful autocrats? Is one of them, with cause or without cause, angry with you, and may you not, unless you can secure the countenance of one of the others, as well go out and hang yourselves? Is there any limit to the petty secret annoyances, humiliations, and insults to which you will be subjected by the zealous underlings of the offended autocrat, even if you should not, though utterly blameless, find yourselves in jail or in fetters before you know where you are? Do you like all this wearying anxiety, all the intriguing, manœuvring and *what not* which it involves? Would you be free to live honest, simple lives, without fear or favour of or from any official? Then join our crusade, and help us in your own quiet way to secure representative institutions, under which alone what your souls yearn for is possible.

I will not press this point further; there is no class, no individual in the entire community whose personal comfort is not materially involved in this question of form of Government. Under a despotic Government, such as ours still is, benevolent and paternal though it may aim at being, we are all really serfs, and though as a matter of forbearance on the part of our autocratic rulers (who as a rule have souls and consciences and would not, could they realize the facts, approve much that is done in their names in view to pleasing them), though I say as a matter of grace on the part of our rulers we have great liberty in many matters, it is as a matter of *grace* and not of *right*—not one of us has any certain security against official oppression and injustice—not one of us can truly call himself a free man, until the existing despotism is replaced by a more or less representative form of Government.

But there are other aspects of the case, and one of these well worthy the consideration of every man who has any money.

Without any notice, in defiance of the universally expressed wishes of the entire community, Burmah has been annexed, and an

* The great scavenger stork of Calcutta.

income tax of 2½ per cent has been summarily imposed upon all of you who are not absolute paupers. This is done by a staunch Liberal (at least so Lord Dufferin considers himself), and one who honestly, I think, though he rather hides his feelings in a golden haze of pretty speeches, sympathizes with us. If this is done in the green tree what will they do in the dry? Why with an unprincipled imperialist like Lord Lytton, backed by a firmly-seated Conservative Government (and such a thing, mind, is perfectly possible) we shall be having Siam annexed, or even an attempt made to dock China of a province or two, to enable us to meet the *French* (there is always some such idiotic stalking horse) on the Mekong; and then we may have a ten per cent income tax, proposed, discussed, passed, all at one single sitting. You may hate it—you may feel as if you would gladly throttle the criminals who have brought about this legalized plunder of your hard-earned wealth—but if you will *not* join us now to secure representative institutions, you must then when the evil day comes—and come it will—just grin and bear it. But with representative institutions all this will be changed; no Viceroy will hand his name down to posterity as a conqueror and plunderer of other nation's territory, at *our* expense; no party will give a sop to a section of its British supporters at *our* cost; and if, despite their better knowledge, the British nation will persist in wars and annexations, it shall not be by the expenditure of India's blood, or India's money that this murder and rapine shall be consummated.

It is needless to go further into details; there is not one single Indian, high or low, rich or poor, whose position, prospects, comfort, and general welfare do not, in numberless different ways, direct and indirect, suffer by the existing autocratic form of Government and will not be improved and enhanced by substituting for this, representative Government. Before you hangs the golden prize, worthy even of our great Indian nation's ambition. Will you, despising all obstacles, press forward and grasp it? Great are the difficulties, strenuous will the struggle be; but the difficulties were greater that British reformers had to face 60 years ago; the struggle for them was even a more arduous one, for we have with us the mighty spirit of the age, that their throes give birth to, and yet they triumphed, as I have shown you, and you too may similarly triumph if you will only follow faithfully in their footsteps.

Friends, brethren, I appeal to all who call our India home, without distinction of creed, or race, or colour. I appeal to all, high and low, gentle and simple, ignorant and learned, rich and poor. This day have I set before you, good and evil, freedom and happiness, or continued serfdom and disquiet; and that, encouraged thereto by the dauntless struggles of British reformers, you will now, one and all, alike for your own sakes and the sakes of those millions who are being crushed beneath the existing despotic system, boldly choose the nobler and the better course and throw in your lot heart and soul with us, this is my hope, my belief, my prayer; this is the OLD MAN'S HOPE; and if I can only live to see this realized, I shall die content and happy!

GOD BLESS INDIA AND ALL WHO LOVE HER!

APPENDIX.

Provisional Rules for giving effect to the 3rd Resolution of the National Congress of 1885, in re the introduction of a representative element into the various Indian Governments, Provincial and Supreme; tentatively and informally agreed to, by many members of the late Congress, as a basis for discussion at the next Meeting of the Congress.

(1).—Not less than one-half the Members of the Reformed Councils, Provincial and Supreme, to be elected. Not more than one-fourth to be officials, having seats ex-officio in such Councils, and not more than one-fourth to be Members, official or non-official, nominated by Government. Elected Members to sit for two years and to be open to re-election, but not to nomination. Nominated Members to sit for five years and to be open thereafter to election, but not renomination.

(2.)—Elected Members of Provincial Councils, on the first introduction of the scheme, to be elected by the Municipal Committees or Town Councils of the larger Municipalities, by Local Boards, Chambers of Commerce, leading Political Associations, the Universities, &c., so as to secure a thorough representation of all the more cultivated and competent sections of the community, the exact details being settled separately for each province and being subject to modification from time to time.

(3).—The elected Members of the Supreme Council to be elected by the elected Members of the several Provincial Councils.

(4).—No elected or nominated Member of any Council, local or supreme, to receive any salary or remuneration in virtue of such membership, but any such Member, already in receipt of any Government salary or allowance, to continue to draw the same unchanged during membership, and all Members to be entitled to be reimbursed any expenses necessarily incurred in travelling in connection with their membership.

(5).—No elected or nominated Member of any Council to be capable of receiving any title or honorary distinction during membership or for a period of five years after he has ceased to be a Member, unless the same be first approved by a majority of the Council to which he belongs or has belonged.

(6).—All educated males of not less than 25 years of age, resident in India, to be held qualified for membership, whether as electees or nominees, without distinction of race, creed, caste or colour.

(7).—All legislative measures, and all financial questions, including of course all budgets, whether these involve new or enhanced taxation or not, to be necessarily submitted to and dealt with by these Councils. In the case of all other branches of the administration any Member

may, after due notice, put any question he sees fit to the ex-officio Members (or such one of these as may be specially charged with the supervision of the particular branch concerned) and shall necessarily (except as hereinafter provided) receive a full and complete reply to his question, together with copies of any papers requisite for the thorough comprehension of the whole subject, and on this reply the Council may at once (or at any subsequent meeting giving due notice thereof) proceed to consider the question and record thereon such resolution as may appear fitting to the majority. Provided that if the subject in regard to which the enquiry is made involves matters of Foreign policy, or Military dispositions or strategy, of such a nature that in the opinion of the Executive the public interests would be materially imperilled by the communication of the information asked for, it shall be competent for them to instruct the ex-officio Members, or one of them, to reply accordingly and decline to furnish the information asked for; but this shall not preclude the Council from considering the question in the light of such information as they may independently possess, and recording thereon such vote, conditional or other, as may to them seem fitting.

(8).—Neither His Excellency the Viceroy, nor any local Governor, nor Lieutenant-Governor shall be either President or Member of any such Council, but they shall communicate with such Councils through one or more of the ex-officio or nominated or elected Members whom they may, from time to time, at their own discretion, constitute their representatives to lay before the Councils the views, projects and proposals of the Executive Governments.

(9).—The Executive Government may nominate the President of the Council, or it may permit the Council to elect this officer, but the Vice-President shall be elected by the Council.

(10).—The Executive Government shall possess the power of overruling the decision arrived at by the majority of the Council, in every case in which in its opinion, the public interests would materially suffer by the acceptance of such decision; but whenever this power is exercised, a full exposition of the grounds on which this has been considered necessary shall be published within ten days, and in the case of local Governments they shall report the circumstances and justify their action to the Government of India, and in the case of this latter, it shall report and justify to the Secretary of State; and in any such case on a representation made through the Government of India and the Secretary of State by the overruled majority, it shall be competent to the Standing Committee of the House of Commons (see Resolution III) to consider the matter and call for any and all papers or information, and hear any persons on behalf of such majority or otherwise, and thereafter, if needful, report thereon to the full House.

(11).—All meetings of such Councils shall be open to the Public and Press, and all proceedings thereat shall be accurately reported and published within 15 days in the Government Gazette.

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Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 23 January, 2019